

# Examining the Status of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

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## Abstract

Turkey has experienced numerous migration events throughout its history and has faced a significant influx of refugees. As we approach the tenth year of this mass migration, the impact of refugees on the fabric of Turkish society has become a significant topic of discussion. Syrian refugees reveal the impact of various factors, including population dynamics, urbanization, education, health, politics and laws related to social structure. This study provides a descriptive analysis of these impacts, which are particularly evident in the large cities where Syrian refugees have settled. Throughout this decade, basic needs such as food, shelter, education and health services have been of vital importance. However, there are significant numbers of school-age children who are out of school, raising concerns about the potential for a lost generation. In addition, refugees face difficulties in work and daily life, and the perception of refugees as cheap labor poses a significant problem for Turkish workers. Such concerns can sometimes lead to negative feelings towards refugees. In field studies involving both Syrians and Turks, there is a common acceptance among both groups that refugees will continue to stay. This discussion focuses on creating a common future with Syrian refugees and embracing a culture of diversity. Consequently, it is vital to adopt integration policies that encompass short-, medium- and long-term strategies for refugees and that will have an even-handed impact in the coming decades. This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the descriptive analysis of impacts, which are particularly evident in the large cities where Syrian refugees have settled. The study focuses on refugees from five sectors which are population dynamics, urbanization, education, health, politics and laws related to social structure. By analyzing Syrian refugees live in Turkey, this discussion aims to create a common future with Syrian refugees and embracing a culture of diversity. The data for this study will mainly be gathered from gazettes and articles in various journals. This approach is chosen due to its cost-effectiveness, allowing for the collection

of information from a sizable literate sample quickly and at a lower expense compared to alternative methods.

## Keywords

Temporary Protection, Syrian, Asylum Seeker, Syria, Turkey

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### 1. Introduction

We are in the tenth year of the migration of Syrians who entered Turkey on April 29, 2011. After the first migration at the Syrian-Turkish border, which was represented by hundreds of people, the number of refugees crossing the border increased significantly. In the tenth year of migration, there were approximately 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey (IOM, 2013). The 100th year of the Republic of Turkey witnessed many local and foreign immigrants in its history. In this case, despite being a country with migration experience, Turkey has never faced such a rapid and intense migration wave in its history. This wave of immigrants first spread to the surrounding regions and then to other continents and countries due to Syria's internal turmoil and Syria's national policy. In other words, Syrian migration has become a global reality. The intensity of this migration flow is concentrated in the countries bordering Syria. With the increase in internal turmoil in the country, Syrian immigrants first moved to Turkey's border provinces and then to big cities. Although the cities without Syrian refugees have been destroyed as of today, the ratio of Syrians in the cities is different. Syrian refugees are concentrated in the three largest cities of Turkey (Istanbul-Ankara-Izmir), the border city in Southeastern Anatolia, the border city of Hatay in the Mediterranean region, and Adana-Mersin in the region.

There is a large amount of empirical and theoretical literature on Syrian migrants and Syrian refugees in the last decade. Studies show that the "temporary" status of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey has begun to transform into a "permanent" dimension. Syrians are part of the social structure of the country they live in and are affected by this structure. The social structure consists of economic, political, demographic, spatial elements, as well as elements related to education, health, culture and law. In this context, the importance of examining the relationship between Syrians who have been living in Turkey for ten years and these social structural elements and the interactions produced by these relationships emerges. Similarly, the social acceptance and social adaptation of Syrian migrants and the Turkish society in Turkey has also revealed the critical situation of the permanent population. This research is a part of social reality and is a multi-dimensional sociological assessment and analysis of Syrian refugees and migrants in the last decade. On this basis, the extraordinary problems are analyzed and evaluated. Suggestions will be made for the solution of the problem.

## 2. Literature and Theoretical Background on the Subject

Migration carries a social reality that exceeds the mobility of human space. Possible migration experiences that can be experienced between continents, between countries and within national borders have left deep traces in social life. In this context, according to Castles and Miller, migration is a collective action caused by social change. This process will affect the receiving community and the sending community. In the migration process, migrants will not only change their geographical location. They have initiated the process of completely changing the lives of themselves, their families and even future generations (Castles & Miller, 2008). According to the definition in the "Glossary of Migration Terms" of the International Organization for Migration, migrants' cross international borders or move within a country. This is a population movement, regardless of its duration, nature and reason, people will be displaced. This includes refugees, internally displaced persons, internally displaced persons, family reunification and economic migration (IOM, International Organization for Migration, 2013). Among the types of migrants, the type of international migrants and the multidimensional nature of the relationship they establish with the social structure of the country are of particular importance in terms of the social integration and acceptance of the country. The subject of this study is overseas migration, that is, international migration that crosses national borders, whether voluntary or forced, has brought some inconsistencies, contradictions and shocks to society and migration. The reason for the aggravation of these contradictions/shocks may be differences in language, religion, culture and education.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines international migration as follows: people leave their country of origin or habitual residence and settle in another country temporarily or permanently. Therefore, international borders are crossed (IOM, 2013). The perpetrators of international migration are international migrants. According to the UN's definition of migration, migration refers to an individual who resides voluntarily or abroad regularly or irregularly for more than one year on the migration route for any reason (IOM, 2013). In this case, international migration is a more general definition that includes refugees or asylum seekers who take refuge in another country as well as regular migrants through legal means. Since migration has a very dynamic and complex structure, it is multidimensional. In this case, it is seen that migration types are used under different definitions. For example, international migration, economic migration, forced migration. Since the definitions of migration and immigration are intertwined, a clear definition cannot be made.

The definition of international migration is inclusive, but it mainly emphasizes leaving the country voluntarily and hoping for better social and economic living conditions (Özgöker & Doğan, 2019). In the context of international migration, special attention should be paid to asylum seekers and refugees who have to leave their homes, especially those who have the right to life and those who have migrated to other countries. According to Altuğ, refugees are part of the foreigners

of a country and are not protected by the state (Özgöker & Doğan, 2019). In the TDK dictionary, the word “mülteci” means “1. A person who takes refuge in another country or place, asylum, refugee. (TDK, [sozluk.gov.tr](http://sozluk.gov.tr)) 2. Although the word refugee is the same as the word asylum, the definition of seeker is consistent, but there are differences at the legal level. An asylum seeker is a person who takes refuge in another country for any reason, requests protection and awaits the result of his/her asylum application. A refugee can be defined as a person whose asylum application is accepted. It is defined as an individual who has lived in the country for more than a year. In the study, the term migrant was used when referring to Syrians according to the UN’s definition of migration, but according to the temporary protection regulation published in the 22nd Official Gazette, the legal status of Syrians in Turkey is under temporary protection. 10/2014 Issue 29153.

### **3. Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the descriptive analysis of impacts, which are particularly evident in the large cities where Syrian refugees have settled. The study focuses on refugees from five sectors which are population dynamics, urbanization, education, health, politics and laws related to social structure. By analyzing Syrian refugees live in Turkey; this discussion aims to create a common future with Syrian refugees and embracing a culture of diversity. The data for this study will mainly be gathered from gazettes and articles in various journals. This approach is chosen due to its cost-effectiveness, allowing for the collection of information from a sizable literate sample quickly and at a lower expense compared to alternative methods.

#### **3.1. Data Collection**

The data for this research was gathered through gazettes and texts of several publicly available journals. Publicly available data on gazettes and texts were reviewed to assess the situation of Syrian refugees. Information from interorganizational websites and social media was also incorporated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the refugees’ issue. Furthermore, additional data was sourced from industry reports and academic studies related to Syrian refugees issue practices in Turkey.

#### **3.2. Analysis**

The research analyzed a variety of the importance of examining the relationship between Syrians who have been living in Turkey for ten years and these social structural elements and the interactions produced by these relationships emerges. Similarly, the social acceptance and social adaptation of Syrian migrants and the Turkish society in Turkey has also revealed the critical situation of the permanent population. This research is a part of social reality and is a multidimensional

sociological assessment and analysis of Syrian refugees and migrants in the last decade. On this basis, analyze and evaluate the extraordinary problems. Suggestions will be made for the solution of the problem.

### 3.3. Procedure

This study will use primarily the data collected using gazettes and texts from various journals. This method will be used because they are a cost-effective way of collecting information from a large literate sample in a short span of time and at a reduced cost than other methods.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Migration from Syria to Turkey

On April 30, 2011, the headline of the first issue of the Cumhuriyet newspaper was "Syrian Migrants". On Friday, April 29, 2011, a group of 252 Syrians arrived in Hatay (IOM, 2013). They entered Turkey through the Yayladağı Cilvegöz border gate and requested asylum (Dilek, 2018). Following the first migration, thousands of people migrated across the border into Turkey. By the end of this century, migration from Syria to Turkey had become a reality for the 3.6 million Syrians living in Turkey. So, how did this mass migration process that led to the displacement of millions of Syrians begin and how did it develop?

The anti-government rebellions that began in Tunisia in 2010 quickly spread to the Arab region, especially Egypt, Libya and Syria. Although this movement led to regime changes in some countries, civil wars continued in others. Its impact in Syria was reflected in the civil unrest in March 2011 (Afad, 2017). After the opposition party conflict turned into a civil war in 2011, Syrians first sought refuge in neighboring countries, and this number has been increasing every year. According to April 2020 data, the number of Syrians who took refuge and registered in five neighboring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt) is 5,563,101. Turkey has 64.5% of the population of 3,587,578 people. It is said that at least 6.6 million Syrians have sought refuge in other countries since 2011 (Erdoğan, 2019).

According to the Syrian migration that started in 2011, Altınözü Tent City was established on June 9, 2011, and Boynuyوغun on June 12, 2011 (Dilek, 2018). According to AFAD's statement dated May 14, 2011, the number of Syrians in the camps established in Hatay Yayladağı and Altınözü is 8,538 (Dilek, 2018). As of April 2011, as part of an open policy, refugees were allowed to cross Syria, and relations between Turkey and the Syrian government were not interrupted during this process. In March 2011, the Turkish government tried to persuade Assad to abandon the violent suppression of the demonstrations. In addition, the reform plan expected by Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu was not accepted by Assad, and relations between the two countries entered a rapid deterioration process (Kirişçi & Karaca, 2015). During the process of including

these initiatives, the number of refugees requesting asylum started in the hundreds and reached thousands within the same year. When the number of refugees reached 10,000 in 2012 (Dilek, 2018), Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Davutoğlu stated that the number of Syrians in Turkey exceeded 10,000, indicating that it was 100 thousand, and said that the event would be held if the number of Syrians in Turkey exceeded 10,000. He stated that this should not be seen as a regional crisis, but as an international crisis ("If the number of Syrians exceeds 100,000..." *Sabah News-paper, August 20, 2012*). According to **Table 1**, the greatest increase in the number of refugees from Syria to Turkey over the years occurred in 2014 and 2015. Although 2014 increased by approximately 1.3 million people compared to the previous year, 2015 increased by approximately 1 million people compared to the previous year. Although the number of Syrian refugees increased by hundreds of thousands from 2015 to 2017, the increase or decrease from 2018 to 2020 is very limited (per 10,000 people) (Dilek, 2018).

**Table 1.** Number of Syrians immigrating to Turkey by year.

2011	252
2012	14,237
2013	224,655
2014	1,519,286
2015	2,503,549
2016	2,834,441
2017	3,426,786
2018	3,623,192
2019	3,576,370
2020	3,612,574

According to the Syrian migration data mentioned above, 2014 is considered a critical year (Dilek, 2018), and it was also the year when the Syrian refugee crisis broke out in Europe (Erdoğan, 2020). Before 2014, the main reason for moving to Turkey was the conflict between the Assad government and anti-regime forces. The main reason for migration to Turkey in 2014 was the Islamic State of Syria (Dilek, 2018). The purpose of fleeing is not only to seek refuge in neighboring countries, but also to cross the land and sea borders of Turkey and seek refuge in Europe. Therefore, Turkey is one of the preferred asylum neighbors, acting as a transit country before moving to a third country. Indeed, the number of international migrants trying to enter Europe from İzmir, Balıkesir, Aydın and Edirne on the Turkish border increased in 2014-2015. According to the *Yeniasır* newspaper, the Coast Guard caught 12,884 illegal immigrants in the Aegean Sea in 2014 and 44,155 illegal immigrants in the first 8 months of 2015 (Dilek, 2018). Although

some ships or refugees whose ships sank lost their lives, thousands of people narrowly escaped death.

Turkey's basic approach towards Syrian refugees is the "open door policy". This policy is based on the Turkish government's policy that the borders of people fleeing persecution and war are and will remain open, their basic needs in Turkey will be met and no one will be forcibly returned. However, this policy has led to the uncontrolled entry of 1 million non-Syrians into Europe in the last five years (Erdoğan, 2018a). Following the refugee influx into European countries in 2014-2015, the EU's policy of not transferring refugees to Europe and keeping them in Turkey with financial support stands out. It has been observed that Turkey has tried to minimize border crossings during this process. In fact, according to the statistics of the General Directorate of Migration Management, there were 146,485 illegal immigrants in 2015, 174,466 in 2016, 175,752 in 2017, 268,003 in 2018 and 454,662 in 2019 (Dilek, 2018). The total number of irregular immigrants arrested from 2015 to 2019 is 1,219,368. As the large number of irregular immigrants caught reveals, in addition to Syrians, refugees from Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries also see Turkey as a transit country for immigrants. In this context, let's make the following assessment: Turkey is not only a bridge for migration from east to west, but also for migration from south to north. When the European Union did not fulfill its promise of financial support to refugees, Turkey gave a card to open its western border. According to the news of *Hürriyet News*, Interior Minister Soylu met with journalists at the immigration conference. While criticizing the EU's asylum policy, Soylu said, "If we open İzmir, 35 thousand people will go to Europe every day" (Hürriyet Newspaper, August 3, 2019). After the martyrdom of Turkish soldiers in Syria on February 29, 2020, Turkey opened its borders to Europe and hundreds of thousands of refugees flocked to Europe. In his article titled "The 10th Anniversary of Syrians in Turkey," Erdoğan explained the situation of the influx of Syrian refugees to Europe as follows: There is no guarantee that Syrians in Turkey will return voluntarily. Return can now be considered an exception. In fact, the percentage of Syrians in Turkey who want to move to Europe has dropped significantly (Erdoğan, 2020).

The pace of migration from Syria to Turkey has slowed down in recent years, but it continues. Therefore, after the Syrian civil strife, the recent large-scale migration from Syria to Turkey (approximately 3.6 million people) has begun to have a significant impact on the country's population and society. Considering that there are new developments and potential migrants in the border regions from time to time, a wave of migrants can be expected to come to Turkey. For example, there are hundreds of thousands of Syrians in the Atme camp near the border. The following statements and predictions in the Special Report on Syrians in Turkey published by the Ombudsman Institution in 2018 are shocking: "Natural population growth and newborn babies due to the possible crossing of the border regions will play a role in this regard. The growing problem is the 'family reunification' we will experience in the future. In this case, Turkey's Syrian population

could exceed 4 to 5 million within ten years" (Dilek, 2018). Therefore, it is important to analyze the impact of large-scale migration on Turkey's social structure and its permanent evolution over the course of ten years.

#### 4.2. Place of Syrians in Demographic, Social, Economic and Political Society Structure of Turkey

##### 4.2.1. Demographic Structure

Syria has received a large number of migrants since its first large-scale migration. It can be seen that some of our provinces and regions have successfully managed this process. In this regard, provinces such as Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Adana, İstanbul and Mersin stand out. Clearly, there are some key factors that enable the cities highlighted in this study to successfully manage large-scale migration. Official data show that 3.6 million Syrian refugees (Dilek, 2018) have settled in Turkey. About half of them are concentrated in cities and border regions. This shows that İstanbul is an important center. According to official data as of March 18, 2020, approximately 1.5 million of the 3.6 million refugees from Syria live on the Syrian border in Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Mardin (Dilek, 2018). In this sense, in addition to the resilience of municipalities in Syria's border regions, projects and good practices determined to improve the lives of Syria's neighbors are also important.

Since the early years of migration, cities outside the border provinces have also been added to the target cities of this large-scale migration. In this case, the most populous cities in Syria are divided into two categories: border cities such as Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay, and industrialized cities such as Adana, Mersin and İstanbul. As shown in the figure below, Syrians in Turkey tend to migrate within the country. As a result, İstanbul, Adana, Bursa, Mersin, İzmir and Konya have become industrial cities that attract a large number of Syrians. As of March 18, 2020, these six industrial cities have hosted a total of 1.39 million Syrian refugees (Dilek, 2018). **Table 2** below shows population structure of Syrians immigrating to Turkey by province.

**Table 2.** Population structure of Syrians immigrating to Turkey by province.

City	Nov. 2014	21 July 2017	18 March 2020
İstanbul	330,000	495,027	496,485
Gaziantep	220,000	336,929	450,031
Şanlıurfa	170,000	433,856	422,729
Mardin	70,000	96,062	88,062
Adana	50,000	165,818	246,462
Kilis	49,000	127,175	112,192
Mersin	45,000	153,976	210,623
Konya	45,000	79,139	113,736
Kahramanmaraş	44,000	93,408	92,293

**Continued**

Bursa	20,000	114,498	175,649
Batman	20,000	20,181	15,118
Şırnak	19,000	15,080	14,973
Kocaeli	15,000	34,957	55,183
İzmir	13,000	113,460	146,352
Osmaniye	12,000	46,157	49,544
Antalya	10,000	458	2199
Kayseri	9500	62,645	75,806
Diyarbakır	5000	30,405	22,881
Adıyaman	2500	27,084	21,688
Samsun	1230	4540	6687
Niğde	1100	3848	5192
Aydın	1000	8806	7849

The age and gender distribution of Syrians under temporary protection is also given in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3.** Age and gender distribution of Syrians under temporary protection (as of 16.09.2020).

Age	Men	Women	Total
Total	1,947,928	1,670,990	3,618,918
0 - 4	255,845	247,129	502,974
5 - 9	282,584	259,466	542,050
10 - 14	203,336	184,421	387,757
15 - 18	142,004	118,486	260,490
19 - 24	286,260	212,543	498,803
25 - 29	202,782	147,883	350,585
30 - 34	159,058	115,893	274,951
35 - 39	118,943	96,797	215,740
40 - 44	84,693	75,701	160,394
45 - 49	60,428	57,203	117,631
50 - 54	49,804	48,873	98,677
55 - 59	37,989	37,978	75,967
60 - 64	28,424	29,263	57,687
65 - 69	20,232	20,736	41,059
70 - 74	7732	8705	16,437
75 - 79	3792	4667	8459
80 - 84	2190	2912	5102
85 - 89	1081	1509	2590
90+	660	905	1565

#### 4.2.2. Social Structure

The Syrian problem in Turkey is, first and foremost, a problem of social cohesion. The problems encountered due to differences in language, culture and lifestyle between refugees and local people are the most important reasons for local intervention. In addition, the emergence of polygamy and related divorces, the abuse of women and children, the encouragement or creation of racial and sectarian polarization and distorted structures can be seen as social effects.

Conservative culture prevails in Turkey's border provinces. Locals react to developments that change this situation. The most important development in this regard is the marriage of single or married Turkish men to young Syrians. This situation, which mainly occurred in Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Hatay, caused a reaction from the locals, especially women. Divorce rates increased in all three provinces due to the Syrian bride problem. Although marriages to Syrians do not appear to be high in official records, the real number is much higher. Because marriages to Syrians are usually made through religious marriages.

Women accused Syrians of seducing their husbands and expressed fear that losing their husbands would put them under pressure. Worst of all, marrying Syrians has become a means of economic gain. A man who wants to get married applies to an agency and receives money from the agency. Marrying a girl is seen as a way for Syrian families to earn money and save their daughters' lives. This is especially evident in Şanlıurfa and Kilis. Another aspect of this problem is the exploitation of young girls. There are children among married Syrians.

Syrians living in the city center usually prefer shantytowns to pay low rent. Some families can live in already disadvantaged families. Most importantly, this will lead to unplanned construction and occupation. Aborigines are unhealthy and deviant in their income expectations, they are at home, and they are running away. This is the current problem of unplanned urbanization. Another social problem related to this situation is that the living conditions of Syrians create suitable spaces for various illegal activities. While young Syrian men are open to exploitation while buying and selling drugs, women are also threatened by prostitution.

Another social problem caused by refugees is child labor. Syrian children living outside of camps have limited opportunities to receive education. The first reason is that the state or NGOs have not yet fully provided this opportunity. The way Syrian families allow their children to work instead of receiving education is equally effective. Children work in various fields due to the need for money. Children selling different products on the street are the main face of this work. Syrian children also work as apprentices in various shops and as cheap labor in manufacturing factories.

Another problem that some border provinces face is demographic changes and the resulting insecurity. Although this effect is not in every province, problems are experienced in Kilis and Hatay, as well as Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep. Kilis is an extraordinary example in this respect. In Kilis, this is a city located mainly in

Turkmenistan and the locals live in their own city. They feel like a minority. Although some of the Syrians are Turkmen, most of them are Arabs. It can be said that the Hatay Arab Alevis are also very worried. The fact that most of the Syrians are Sunni has changed the sensitive demographic structure of the city and created a sense of insecurity among the Arab Alevis.

#### **4.2.3. Economy/Workforce Structure**

The disintegration of the rural structure due to neoliberal economic policies implemented in Turkey in the 1980s accelerated migration to the metropolis. The impact of the increasing terrorist incidents in the east and southeast of the 1990s on migrants in big cities cannot be ignored. When Syrians started migrating to Turkey in 2011, approximately 75% of the Turkish population lived in cities (Dilek, 2018). Although Turkish cities accommodated a large number of people created by internal migration, they also became places where poverty, unemployment, income gaps and inequality indicators increased. In such an environment, there were only a few hundred Syrian migrants who first came to Turkey and three years later this number reached 1.5 million. In the next few years, this unforeseen number of refugees increased even more and reached 3.6 million. Turkey follows an open policy towards refugees who had to flee from war and the conditions of the country and humanitarian aid; it ensures that the basic needs of millions of people such as food, clothing, shelter and heating are met. In addition to the above requirements, Turkey's education and health needs are also important. They bring huge costs to the economy. Despite limited aid from the European Union and the United Nations, Turkey has been facing a heavy burden of Syrian refugees for many years.

The total population of Syrians seeking asylum in Turkey, the active working population, that is, the population between the ages of 15-64, exceeds 2 million (Erdoğan, 2019). The published legal framework determines the conditions for millions of Syrians to participate in the labor market. The working conditions of Turkish refugees have been clarified within the scope of Law No. 4817 on Work Permits for Foreigners. Syrians with a residence permit have received a work permit provided that it does not exceed this period (Erdoğan, 2018a). The details of the law were published in the official gazette dated January 15, 2016, "Regulation on Temporary Protection Work Permits for Foreigners". In this case, the employer has determined a quota for employment in Syria. Foreigners granted temporary protection in the workplace cannot exceed 10% of the number of Turkish workers working in the same workplace (Article 8).

Before this, Syrians had to work as cheap labor in the informal economy to make ends meet while receiving aid. Syrians do not have equivalent documents or work permits, and they may have a skilled workforce in Turkey that motivates them to work in the informal sector. This decision postponed work permits and the release of qualified personnel in Turkey (Aslantürk & Tunç, 2018). According to statistics released by the Ministry of Family, Trade and Social Services, the number of Syrians who received work permits after the implementation of the

regulation in 2016 was 13,290, 20,966 in 2016, and 34,573 in 2018 (Dilek, 2018). These data show that the number of Syrians with work permits is very limited.

In Turkey, despite the government's incentive plan to encourage registered employment and efforts to control undeclared work, hundreds of thousands of Syrians still participate in the labor market with a high rate of undeclared work. As Aslantürk and Tunç stated, the fact that Syrians work in undeclared jobs and cannot afford unstable working conditions contributes to the exploitation of labor by employers. Child labor is also present among Syrians working undeclared. Low wages and many uncertain factors in Syrian families also push children to work. This situation can also be seen as a lost generation in future projections. Considering the possibility of Syrians living permanently in our country, it can be said that the lost generation may negatively affect Turkey (Aslantürk & Tunç, 2018). The number of Syrian migrants who participate in the labor market in Turkey undeclaredly is estimated to be between 800,000 and 1.2 million (Şentürk, 2020). Lordoğlu stated that Syrians are more dependent on working in the labor market. Construction, agriculture, trade and industry belong to these sectors. One of the problems that Syrians often face when relying on working conditions is that they only receive half the wages of local workers. In addition to being forced to work for low wages, in some cases they are not willing to pay the wages they deserve (Lordoğlu, 2017).

Syrians have turned to the economic center of the country in search of work. In addition to Gaziantep and Adana, which are close to the Syrian border, economically attractive centers such as Istanbul, Bursa, Konya and Kayseri, which do not have direct geographical and cultural ties with Syria, have also attracted Syrian migrants (Şentürk, 2020). It has been determined that Syrians prefer places where they can make a living and have relatively better employment opportunities when choosing a place to settle (Çalışkan, 2020). Local people are concerned that Syrians will find a place in the labor market. Indeed, Syrian workers protested in the provinces of Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş and Adana (Erdoğan, 2018a). Similarly, Turkish workers protested the low wages of Syrian workers in the Işıkkent Shoemakers' Site in the Bornova Neighborhood of İzmir. According to the results of a field study on the impact of Syrian refugees on the Turkish economy, approximately four-fifths of the people living in Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep attribute the decrease in wages to the refugees. Half of the people Kirish interviewed attributed the decrease in wages to the refugees. Syrians are also employers in the economic sphere. As we all know, Syrian operators are also moving their production facilities to Turkey and sometimes even moving all their employees to Syrian companies in Turkey. Cities such as Gaziantep and Mersin, which had close commercial relations with Syria before the civil war, benefited from this. On the other hand, many Syrians prefer to establish companies and businesses in Turkey (Şentürk, 2020). According to the data of the Turkish Ministry of Trade Türk-İş, the number of Syrian companies residing in Turkey is approximately 15,000 (Şentürk, 2020). In the tenth year of Syrian migration, the impact of refugees on

the economy and the labor market is one of the most important issues.

#### 4.2.4. Political and Security Structure

It is not possible to address the migration process of the world and the country independently of politics. The traces of the decisions and implementation practices of those who hold the administrative power of the state have significantly affected the structure of society. In this context, Oytun and Gündoğar made the following decision: In the discussions held after the Syrians arrived in the country, the right to asylum was sometimes ignored and the displacement of the Syrians became political material, in other words, the humanitarian aspects were ignored. The tension between the Syrians and the local people and the increasing distrust among the people have led to political polarization. The political environment of Turkey is one of the factors affecting the attitudes of Syrians. It can be said that the attitude towards Syrians is determined by political preferences. Those who do not do this may react due to their political preferences (Oytun & Gündoğar, 2015). Indeed, in a study conducted on Syrians in 2017, "What are the rules regarding the political rights of Syrians? Should I do it? The rate of participation in the AK Party's "political rights should not be granted" is 77.2%, CHP 96.4%, MHP 95.9%, HDP 92.2% (Erdoğan, 2018b). In the same study, AK Party members agreed with the statement "none of them should be granted citizenship" regarding Syrian refugees: CHP According to the data obtained from these studies, AK Party, MHP, CHP and HDP voters have different attitudes towards Syrians. In this case, it can be said that the parties' preferences are correct. The opinions of the participants have a decisive effect.

Since the Syrians came to Turkey in 2011, two general and local elections and one presidential election have been held. During this process, the Syrian issue has become a political trump card for political actors to return to Syria. Although it is well known that the CHP has the same understanding in terms of principles, when it comes to Syrians, we will encounter claims that they will be deported. The AKP, on the other hand, has put the Syrian integration policy on its agenda and emphasized that the Syrians will be sent back when the necessary conditions are met in order not to lose votes on the political stage.

The political influence of Syrians in Turkey can be seen from two different perspectives. One is the influence of Syrians on the political environment of Turkey. Second, the risk of conflict with the local population, the increase in security problems and the political polarization among the local population are all factors. On the other hand, the political environment of Turkey is also beneficial for Syrians. And one of the determining factors. Political preferences sometimes lead to more tolerant attitudes towards Syrians. On the contrary, people who do not have direct contact with Syrians are purely political figures. In this case, it can be said that the Syrian issue is a factor in the political polarization of the country.

The most serious security risk posed by refugees is the local population's reaction turning into a violent mass reaction due to provocation. Small examples of this are almost everywhere. If the current process in the border regions continues,

the events that took place in Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş in July 2014 may also happen in other border provinces. The most dangerous consequence of the local population's reaction is that Syrians feel the need to organize to ensure their own justice and security. Recently, Syrians have begun to discuss joint actions and organizations to protect themselves. This has led to small-scale judicial incidents turning into large-scale discussions. Even the Syrian organization has caused a reaction among tolerant people. This situation has led to an increasing polarization between the two communities. This situation also brings with it integration difficulties.

One of the biggest fears of locals is that they feel vulnerable to terrorist attacks. It is believed that some Syrians may want to provoke or punish Turkey. There are concerns that Syrians may be loyal to Assad, members of the Islamic State or members of the PKK. This is especially common in border districts and provinces close to the border, such as Kilis and Şanlıurfa. Judicial cases involving refugees or terrorist acts could seriously change the perception of all Syrians. This would pose greater security risks. It is worth watching carefully.

Refugees living in cities continue their lives in shantytowns. First, it makes the adaptation process difficult and prepares for reasons that may lead to medium and long-term security problems. In addition, living under difficult conditions is also important for the emergence and development of various crimes and violence. It can be said that low-income, uneducated young people who face identity crises and are excluded will be the source of many crimes in the future. If the local people do not take precautions, these lost children will soon become a source of mafia and theft. This means that new security risks will soon emerge, although they are not yet felt.

#### **4.2.5. Social Integration Process**

The first general regulatory document regarding Turkish refugees and asylum seekers was the Settlement Law of 1934. This law is a law on asylum and migration movements and settlement in Turkey, formulated with a nationalist mindset in the process of establishing a nation-state. In this law, Turkey defines immigrants as "persons of Turkish origin and culture". With the entry of approximately 500,000 refugees from Iraq into Turkey in 1991, individual asylum cases increased and regulations regarding asylum status were adopted in 1994 (Dilek, 2018).

According to the provisions of Article 3 of this Regulation, refugees are persons who, because they have reason to fear for their nationality and to leave the country of which they are nationals, cannot benefit from the protection of the country of which they are nationals. Country. If, as a result of events in Europe, they are persecuted on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, they will be admitted if they are not citizens or former residents of the country or if they do not wish to return for fear of the country to which they wish to return. Similarly, according to Article 3 of the 1994 Regulation, asylum seeker refers to a country other than their nationality because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political status.

It refers to aliens who are not citizens or do not wish to return to a country other than their place of original residence or who do not wish to return for fear of return.

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, refugees are “races, religions, nationalities, members of certain social groups or political opinions. Citizens are persons who are outside their country of residence and cannot benefit from the protection of that country for justified reasons. Due to such events, they are defined as “persons who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin due to fear”. Turkey’s refugee law is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention, and the concepts of refugee and asylum seeker are determined on the basis of territorial reservations, which differ from the definition in international law. Therefore, Turkey only grants refugee status to its citizens. Therefore, the member states of the Council of Europe, the 1994 Asylum Regulation The definition of refugees in China is limited to people coming from Europe. People coming from countries that are not members of the Council of Europe are not accepted as refugees. According to the 1994 Asylum Regulation, asylum seekers coming from outside Europe can legally stay in Turkey for a reasonable period of time, that is, in a third country. They are granted “temporary protection” by being allowed to live in Turkey until they are accepted as refugees (Acer, Kaya, & Gümüş, 2011). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the executive agency responsible for the permanent resettlement of people outside Europe to third countries. Asylum seekers or refugees are qualified persons within the scope of this Regulation and are referred to the competent authorities within 10 days of their entry. The conditions for applying for asylum require those fleeing conflict to understand the laws of the country of asylum. The immigration law, which was updated within the scope of the procedures of the EU member states in 2006, continued to use the definition of immigration in the 1934 law. Therefore, although various arrangements have been made for non-Turkish asylum seekers and refugees from outside Europe who have been subjected to human rights violations in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan and have been forced to flee to Turkey, it accepts this different treatment.

Although Turkey’s refugee law constitution has been based on the 1951 Geneva Convention since 1968, the concepts of refugee and asylum seeker are determined according to geographical restrictions that differ from the definition of international law. Therefore, Turkey is only the European Commission. It can grant refugee status to its citizens. According to the 1994 asylum regulation, people coming from countries outside the Council of Europe are provided with “temporary protection” and are allowed to live in Turkey until they are recognized as refugees by a third country. According to a report prepared by the International Human Rights Organization and the United Nations Refugee Agency, hundreds of refugee applications come to Turkey from countries that are not members of the European Commission every year. Since more refugees enter Turkey from countries outside of Europe, most asylum seekers cannot obtain refugee status in Turkey. For example,

after the United States intervened in Iraq, asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria were granted refugee status due to Turkey's geographical reservations that were not included in the 1951 Geneva Convention. Since the 1967 Protocol has not been amended, Syrians who seek asylum in Turkey as refugees under "temporary protection" do not have geographical restrictions to obtain refugee status.

In July 2016, it was announced that Syrians will have the opportunity to become citizens of the Republic of Turkey, an important step in the integration process. The main criterion for Syrians planning to become citizens is that they are higher education graduates who have worked in the fields of industry, science, economy or technology in Turkey and have a work permit in Turkey. According to the General Directorate of Population and Citizenship, 55, 5839 Syrians are citizens of the Republic of Turkey. Although active arrangements have been made for the integration of Syrian refugees into a permanent solution, most Syrians who do not have the necessary qualifications will be deprived of their citizenship rights.

As of September 2018, there are more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey (Dilek, 2018), 94% of whom live outside refugee camps. Due to the overcrowding of refugee camps and their long stay in Turkey, most Syrian refugees live in rented accommodation in the city. The majority of Syrian refugees interviewed for the study stated that paying high rents is difficult. They live in small apartments, often in poor condition, with several families living together. The interviewed Syrian refugees stated that their lives in Turkey are very difficult because they are victims of labor exploitation, labor exploitation, and high rents, and they are subject to discrimination in their daily lives.

Syrian refugees are forced into informal work. They are exploited, work long hours, receive low wages and have no social security. Bloch (2004) uses asylum seekers and refugees living in the UK as an example to explain the slow pace of integration in the refugee labor market. Syrians working in precarious and difficult conditions say they struggle to pay rent because they lack a stable and sufficient income.

Economic hardships have prevented many Syrian children from continuing their education. And while they are preventing you from doing so, they force you to work. Syrian refugees although the right to work is enshrined in law, entering the labor market is not easy, as many employers prefer to work unregistered rather than obtain work permits for the Syrians they hire. According to a report published by Crisis Group in January 2018, there are an estimated 750,000 - 950,000 Syrians working unregistered jobs (Dilek, 2018). Unregistered Syrians face discrimination, racism, and job insecurity in the workplace. Another Syrian refugee whose children are forced to work said that financial difficulties and language barriers negatively affect their daily lives.

Inequality of economic opportunity, unemployment, poverty, discrimination at work Syrian refugees also stated that they feel unsafe due to the racism they encounter in their daily lives.

Many of the Syrians interviewed faced similar problems, and some wanted to go to Europe because of their precarious legal status and limited rights in practice.

**Foreigners and International Protection Law** Although Syrians have the right to education, work and health, a small number of Syrians in particular have the right to work. In practice, as some Syrians say, limited rights also negatively affect the integration process of Syrians and limit their relations with the host society. Some Syrians living in Turkey have transferred their investments in Syria to Turkey and started doing business in Turkey. According to 2017 data, Syrians opened 8,000 registered companies and 10,000 unregistered companies in Turkey. It is seen that the integration process of Syrians who set up a business in Turkey is faster than the integration process of Syrians who have to work in Turkey.

Syrians enter the labor market on their own, more Syrians cannot access economic resources. It seems to be developing rapidly. This situation shows that refugees do not benefit from equal rights in practice as envisaged. When looking at the experiences of Syrian refugees interviewed to obtain rights, Syrians who invest, establish businesses and migrate in Turkey have economic backgrounds and are more likely to obtain more rights, especially in terms of access to housing and the labor market. However, it is not that Syrian refugees have specific rights, but that financial resources and rights are more difficult to obtain. This has led to slow progress in the integration process. Most studies on refugee rights and integration processes in Europe emphasize similar findings, such as refugees' limited or inaccessible access to the labor market, social isolation and inability to plan for the future because they feel insecure (Bloch, 1999; 2004; Stewart & Mulvey, 2014).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the decade from 2011 to 2020, the Republic of Turkey experienced the largest wave of migration in history. In 2011, the number of refugees fleeing the turmoil and conflict caused by the policies and practices of the Syrian government reached 3.6 million. In the relationship between migration and society, this research emphasizes the ten-year process of Syrian migration and the main problem areas (such as population-urbanization-education-health-law-politics) and the social integration process. Therefore, the following suggestions can be made based on the Syrian migration process, problem areas and the integration process.

The official agency reports clearly stated that the population of Syria will increase in the next few years. Therefore, discussions about Syrians will be on the country's agenda today and in the near future. It will obviously be maintained. In this case, the medium, short and long-term population of Syrians should be estimated and policies should be developed accordingly. Based on these estimates, the lack of Syrian population will also be discovered. Since most Syrian refugees are low-income people, most of them settle in poor communities in big cities. Asylum seekers can build their own shantytowns by isolating themselves in these neighborhoods, and there have been news about "Syrian neighborhoods/blocks" and "Little Syria". Deciphering the harmonious code of an established society with this

isolated group of people will increase social integration and encourage the solution of the problems encountered. Obviously, the reality of approximately 1 million Syrians, especially in Istanbul, the heart of the Turkish economy, means that the city's ability to provide services will be challenged.

The successful measures taken by Turkey in terms of economic problems, poverty and unemployment indicators will also reduce the intervention against refugees who are seen as increasing poverty/unemployment. Similarly, measures should be taken to prevent refugees from being seen as cheap labor, to strengthen control over them and to prevent them from becoming unregistered workers.

For Syrian refugees, it is important how children and youth receive educational activities, but it is also important to include uneducated children and youth. Third, it is also important to increase vocational training and expand language education for adults. In addition, in order to reveal the talents of Syrian children and youth, the curriculum includes differences in basic human rights and freedoms at all levels of education, as well as directs the positive aspects of the country's economy. It should be carefully considered.

The Syrian reality in Turkey should be seen as a non-partisan issue. The fact that refugees benefit from rights and freedoms stemming from universal law should not be ignored. This method can reduce Syrians' submission to sterile political conflicts. As stated in this research report, political parties with and without parliamentary representatives should also participate in determining Syrian refugee policies. Turkish society believes that these policies are permanent. In addition, although Turkey, which receives the most refugees in the world, has established an "Integration and Change Agency", a Ministry of Migration should also be established as soon as possible.

The social cohesion process is multifaceted and coordination between actors who can support the social cohesion of Syrian refugees is very important. Since local governments are one of these actors, policies and practices targeting Syrian refugees should also benefit from the contributions of these actors. In some large cities where the administrative authority was transferred to the opposition party in the recent local elections, cooperation between municipalities and central government and provincial units has become even more important. Similarly, the work of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national non-governmental organizations working for refugees and asylum seekers should be supported. Cooperation should be developed.

In short, Turks, who have experienced many migration processes in history, are not strangers to the problems of their relatives and friends who are adapting to the country. This can be considered as an advantage and motivation to sympathize with Syrian refugees. In fact, according to research, Syrians' acceptance of Turkey is very high. Faced with this level of acceptance, the economic, social and political concerns of the Turkish people are closely related to Syrians. These concerns may increase with false news about Syrians in the media and rumors in the public. The way to overcome these problems is through multilateral and coordinated policies

and accurate information channels. Obviously, the impact of Syrian immigrants will be reflected in future generations and decades. Therefore, in order to solve this “national” issue that concerns the entire society, methods and practices intersect within the framework of creating the future together and living together in diversity.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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